

Henry David Thoreau, Famed As Nation's Poet-Naturalist

Famous Man of Letters Spent Much Time Communing with Nature. Born in Concord.

Graduate of Harvard and Noted as Lecturer and Inventor—Was Lover of Open.



From A. R. Marble's "Thoreau: His Home, Friends, and Books." Copyright, 1912, by Thos. Y. Crowell & Co.

Left, Thoreau's main street home, Concord center, Henry David Thoreau, the poet-naturalist; right, Thoreau's birthplace near Concord, as reproduced from an early drawing.

No American man of letters spent so much time in the open air communing with nature as Henry David Thoreau, the poet-naturalist. The ninety-fifth anniversary of the birth of this eccentric genius will be remembered next Friday by those who love him for his freedom of thought and action and the simplicity of his life.

In conduct of thought he was Emersonian, and in manner of deeds he was as independent and erratic as John Brown and Walt Whitman. Thoreau was well acquainted with these three men and greatly admired them. He possessed the characteristics of each of them, but he was a man apart from them all. He was Thoreau—a man. No person has ever succeeded in imitating him and none ever will.

Thoreau was born in Concord, Mass., July 12, 1812. His ancestors on his father's side were French and his mother was the descendant of an old English family. While a youngster Henry was a very serious man and because of his temperance his companions nicknamed him "Judge." Thoreau did not delight in the games of his fellows, but rather preferred to wander through the woods and drift about on the river which flowed majestically through his native town.

Enters Harvard University.

He entered Harvard College in 1833, and after four years of study, was graduated, but without distinction. He was not very fond of study and spent much of his time reading and taking long walks. In his senior year he became very restless, and it was with difficulty that he succeeded in being graduated. Upon leaving college he went to Maine with the hope of procuring a position as teacher, but the trip was made in vain, and he finally returned to Concord empty handed.

He and his elder brother John then taught for a short time in the Concord Academy. The pedagogical position was not congenial to the future poet-naturalist, and he resigned to engage in making lead pencils under the supervision of his father, who had been in the business for some time. Henry, during his early years, had attained great skill in the manufacture of pencils, and it was predicted by all the neighbors that he would make a great success of the trade which his father was following. Young Thoreau worked diligently upon a certain kind of pencil, and after perfecting it, he turned to the export business at Boston, who pronounced it to be one of the best made in the country. After his return from Boston, a friend asked him if he intended to remain in the lead pencil business.

"Why should I?" replied Thoreau. "I certainly would not do again what I have done once."

At the age of twenty-one years Thoreau began lecturing in the Concord Lyceum. His first lecture was on "Society." The people were puzzled by his strange theories and his idiosyncrasies, and out of curiosity they began to hear him. As he became better known, he visited the neighboring cities and towns to deliver lectures. From time to time up to his death he lectured at the Lyceum.

Unfortunate in Love.

There was interpolated in Henry's life a pathetic love episode, which undoubtedly contributed to his sadness and to the temperament of the poet-naturalist. While teaching at Concord, he and his brother John fell in love with the same girl. The maiden was Ellen Sewall, a granddaughter of a Mrs. Ward, who was a close friend of the Thoreaus. Because of the intimacy of the two families, Ellen and the two boys came frequently together, and a strong friendship terminated in deep love sprung up between them. Ellen was sixteen years old, and was extremely beautiful.

John outwardly expressed his love for the young girl and wooed her assiduously, but Henry nursed his love for her in secret, and he was not slow to realize that his brother John was in love with Ellen. Henry resigned himself in favor of his brother. John was faithful to Ellen up to the time of his death some years later. It is certain that however much Henry loved the young girl, she was not attached to him, for upon the death of John she immediately married a New England clergyman. Henry's resignation meant a great sacrifice to the young literary man. Traces of sadness may be found in poems written during this period. While he makes no direct mention of Ellen, it is obvious that it is she to whom he so often refers with a poet's sorrow.

In August, 1838, he went on a voyage with his brother John along the Concord and Merrimack rivers for the purpose of getting a greater insight into the beauty of nature. He kept a minute journal of the entire trip, and from these notes wrote his "Week" on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, which was published ten years later. When the book was placed upon the market it met with but little sale. Thoreau took 700 copies home from the publishers, and arranging them in his bookcase, and shortly afterward remarked to a friend: "My, what a respectable library! And to think that they are all of my own writing!"

Lover of Open.

From his youth upward Thoreau was a lover of the open. He made it a rule through life to spend half of each day in the fields or the woods, or on the river. In 1841 he built a modest hut in the woods about a mile from Concord on the shore of Walden Pond. Here he lived the simple life for two years. He raised his own vegetables and took great delight in gardening. His bean patch was a source of great pleasure to him, and he wrote some of his most beautiful paragraphs upon this theme.

Thoreau was a vast music in the tinkling of a hoe against a stone in the churning of church bells. To him there was poetry in the plowing of fields and in the digging of weeds.

At Walden Thoreau proved conclusively his oft-advanced opinion that man could live comfortably on less than \$100 a year, and, in addition, have two-thirds of his time to himself. The furnishings of his house were few and of the simplest design. There was no luxury there. Thoreau was content with the luxury of nature to supply that which his simple home lacked. He spent the time roaming through the woods, picking berries, and writing. He never went on a trip without carrying a music book under his arm. This was used for the purpose of pressing choice plants for his botanical studies. He took with him his diary and pencil, his spy glass for observing birds, and his microscope for examining flowers. A big jackknife and a bundle of twine could always be found in his pockets.

Thoreau was truly a naturalist, but he was one of a strange type. He was never seen with a gun or a trap. He took in their stead a journal, his spy glass, and his microscope. He knew Nature intimately. He had lived with her so long that he could tell what flowers each day would give birth to. He often boasted that if he should fall asleep like Rip Van Winkle and slumber for many years, when he awoke he could tell within two days of the year by the flowers which were blooming. Thoreau hated to hear the sound of his own footsteps, so he always walked on the grass. The noise of the gravel road was highly distasteful to him.

"I never found the companion," wrote Thoreau once, "that was so companionable as solitude."

Wrote Stories in Open.

The poet-naturalist could never write when cooped up in his hut. It was necessary for him to go into the open with the fragrance of nature about him before his thoughts would gush forth in all their beauty and freedom. Thoreau was practically a vegetarian. His only departures from the vegetarian theory were made during long trips through the woods, when he ate pork along with his home-raised beans as seasoning.

The literary product of these years on the shore of the pond was "Walden; or, Life in the Woods." The book is highly subjective. It contains many sensuous descriptions of the seasons, and the scenery around Concord. "Walden" and "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers" were the two books published by Thoreau during his life. The latter is in substance a series of essays held together by beautiful descriptions of nature, as seen on the trip taken by Henry and his brother John.

After leaving Walden and returning to Concord, Thoreau made a living by performing odd jobs for his neighbors. One day he would be seen whitewashing, and the next day he would be building a fence. One week he would be gardening and the next he would be surveying. He was an excellent mathematician, and he wrote extensively for a surveyor. His ability in this line was recognized by the people of Concord, and there was always work waiting for him. The poet-naturalist would never restrict himself to any one occupation, or confine himself to indoor labors. His province was the open, and to him any class of honest toil was commendable and honorable. He lectured occasionally and wrote extensively for magazines. It was after leaving Walden that he began to write industriously.

Made Study of Animals.

He penetrated the woods of Maine as a means of studying the moose and Indian at close range. He remained there for many months, becoming friendly with the Redskins, and learning much of their life. As a result of this trip, the literary world was given "Maine Woods," which was not published until after the author's death.

In 1850 Thoreau, accompanied by his friend and constant companion, Ellery Channing, made a trip on foot to Canada. The pedestrians were wont to term themselves the "Knights of the Umbrella and the Bundle," for the reason that their entire baggage consisted of an umbrella and a small bundle of sticks. The trip was not a success, as the two did not appeal very strongly to Thoreau after a few days of tramping.

"It is dirty work," he said. "A man can't walk all over the place." The story of the journey is told in "A Yankee in Canada," which was published after the death of Thoreau.

The poet-naturalist was strongly opposed to the paying of taxes to a government which he seemed grossly unjust, and as a result was placed in jail. He had repeatedly announced that he would not pay the poll tax levied against him, but he was subsequently locked up in jail. While behind the bars he was visited by his friend Emerson.

Henry, said Emerson, upon seeing the poet-naturalist, "why on earth are you here?"

"Ralph Waldo Emerson," replied Thoreau, "why are you not here?"

Many persons offered to pay the author's tax, but he refused to permit them. Finally his Aunt Maria in disguise visited the jail and obtained his release by paying the amount of the tax.

Admirer of Whitman.

Thoreau was a great admirer of Walt Whitman, and paid that literary freak a visit to see him. He was greatly impressed with the independent spirit of John Brown.

After the Harper's Ferry episode, when Brown was held in universal contempt by the people of both North and South, Thoreau suddenly announced his intention of making a public defense of the despised character. He heralded it throughout the neighboring country that he would deliver an address at Concord on Sunday night, October 30, 1839. His friends tried to persuade him not to attempt such a bold act, but Thoreau was so persistently and effectively for the cause of the South, that he was on the platform before a great crowd. He delivered an address which is now recognized as the most eloquent and logical defense ever made of John Brown.

"For once," he said, "we are lifted into the region of truth and manhood. No man in America has ever stood up so persistently and effectively for the dignity of human nature, knowing himself for a man, and the equal of any and all governments. The only government that I recognize—and it matters not how few are at the head of it, or how small its army—is that power which establishes justice in the land."

Thoreau was as radical and independent in thought as he was in following beatitudes, which he framed, well illustrate this fact:

"Blessed were the days before you read a President's message."

"Blessed are the young, for they do not read the President's message."

"Blessed are they who never read a newspaper, for they shall see Nature, and through her, the President's message."

The following sentences are likewise characteristic of Thoreau's style:

"The youth gets together his materials to build a bridge to the moon, or perhaps, a palace or temple on the earth, and at length the middle-aged man concludes to build a woodshed with them."

"The bluebird carries the sky on his back."

"No tree has so fair a bole and so handsome an instep as the beech."

"How can we expect a harvest of

thought who have not had a seedtime of character?"

Author of Eight Volumes.

Thoreau was the author of eight volumes. Six of these were not published until after his death. In writing his essays and books, Thoreau drew from a master. Beauty of description, independence of thought, and clearness of action are characteristics of his literary productions.

Although the poet-naturalist spent more than half of his life in the open, he fell a victim to consumption, which was probably inherited from his father's side of the family. The author died May 6, 1849, of dread white plague. His death was undoubtedly brought about prematurely by exposure to the cold and dampness while on excursions into the woods. Many a night he slept on the cold, wet ground with no covering over him.

Thoreau was a firm believer in immortality, but when a friend questioned him just before his death concerning the time to come, he answered: "One world at a time!"

On the coffin of the poet-naturalist were inscribed at his request these words:

"Hail, to thee, O man! thou hast come from the transitory place to the imperishable."

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WOMAN WHO AIDED HUGO PASSES AWAY

Mme. Jeay Copied Many of Great Author's Manuscripts—Died Aged Eighty-two.

Berlin, July 6.—An interesting personality has passed away in Guernsey, as the Gazette Official of that island informs us. This is Mme. Jeay, who was for many years in the service of the Hugo family. She was employed by the great poet to copy his manuscripts—no, not to copy his manuscripts, but to copy his handwriting, and among the works which she transcribed during his prolonged residence at Hauteville House, in the time of the Second Empire, were the first part of the "Le Génie des Siècles," brought out in 1860, "Les Misérables" (1862), "Les Travailleurs de la Mer" (1868). This was a position of confidence, as Victor Hugo took many precautions to keep his manuscripts secret, and the copies thus made were forwarded direct to his publishers in Belgium.

When Hugo returned to settle in Paris on the fall of the empire in September, 1870, Mme. Jeay remained behind at Hauteville House, but she saw him again more than once, as he paid several visits to the island during the period that elapsed between that date and his death in 1885.

Eventually she removed to a house in the suburbs, where she led a very retired life, as she was in delicate health, and latterly had been unable to leave her room. She has died at the age of eighty-two.

The great poet was an indefatigable worker. He was one of the many notable of the old French school, who never took time to take time by the forelock. Rising before 6 o'clock in the morning, he wrote without a moment's interruption in his glass room at the top of Hauteville House until noon. This was a rule which he never broke, and he was free for the rest of the day, though his mind was always busy, and many a chapter was prepared in the solitary walks he loved to take in the beautiful country of the island. The life of the island, which was his home for so many years.

Some points raised by Modern Medicine in condemning hobbie skirts and other apparel of the fair sex:

Hobbie skirts are a pitfall and menace to the innocent and virtuous female.

To be up to date women thoughtlessly adopt the extreme. They give no consideration to the spectacle or freaks they become.

Female apparel particularly reflects the manners and morals of a people and period.

Dress has value to the human female as a means of attracting masculine attention.

Often the qualities of reticence and modesty are sacrificed that alone make her attractive.

True Indictments Against the Dress

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MOTHERS AND CHILDREN ENJOY SUMMER DAYS IN THE COUNTRY

Camps "Good Will" and "Get Well" of the Associated Charities Caring for Mothers and Children in Sanitary Camp in Rock Creek Park.

Camp Good Will welcomed a party of eighty mothers and children to the joy of a two weeks' outing in a delightful spot in the country at its opening for the season last Wednesday. They came in families and groups of neighborhood friends, and here and there a little boy or girl all alone. Many came on street cars, but often a fashionable limousine or handsome turn out drove into the hospitable camp, crowded to its capacity with happy though tired-looking mothers, and open-eyed, delighted children, for Camp Good Will is intended for poor mothers and young children who would otherwise have no summer vacation.

It is beautifully situated in Rock Creek Park, on the very top of a high hill where the air is clear and bracing, and breezes seldom fail.

Ten years ago the outings committee of the Associated Charities began, in a modest way, to furnish carfare for old people as well as mothers and children to get them to the parks and the Zoo. Picnic parties and outdoor sports were planned to lure the "shut-ins" and those in crowded sections to spend a day in the open, gradually the need of a permanent camp developed, and in 1904 Camp Good Will was established.

A well-preserved old farm house is the center of the camp and around it thirty-five tents are grouped. The large ones accommodate six cots on a raised platform, and as far as possible families and neighborhood parties are put in separate tents, where mothers may personally care for their children, or the neighborly feeling may be nurtured. The older boys sleep in tents a little removed from the center of the camp and the young men help sleep near them.

Provides for 150 Guests.

Camp Good Will has provisions for 150 guests. They are invited in two groups for a stay of two weeks. Each week eighty of the guests return to their homes, leaving the remaining eighty to welcome the newcomers and teach them the few rules and routine of the camp. Great attention is given to the physical side of living. In fact, the aim of the work is recreational. A large proportion of both mothers and children who go to the camp are anemic, underfed, and undeveloped. They are given the best of wholesome food, plenty of pasteurized milk from a carefully tested herd—a quart of milk a day being allowed each child—abundance of fresh vegetables raised on the camp farm, sanitary sleeping accommodations, facilities for bathing, and plenty of good times.

Early Rising Rules.

Early rising is held to be a good thing for children, but no child is rudely awakened from a sound sleep. At the sound of a bell the whole camp gathers about the flagpole and the colors are run to the top. Then, with lusty voices they sing the first verse of "America." Some one playing the piano in the nearby pavilion, and the graphophone adding its voice to the others. After that breakfast, play, the morning round of house-keeping duties, a swim in the pool and a half hour of just resting before dinner. In the afternoon diversions of all sorts are in order. Many kindly disposed friends, either come themselves or send conveyances for children to take rides through the park or neighboring country. Most of them have never been in an automobile, and their delight can only be imagined when a large car drives in ready to take passengers.

The "good night service" is one of the prettiest and sweetest in camp. At the sound of the curfew, mothers, children, officers, and help-ers gather in "James Pavillion." Grown-ups sit in the comfortable rockers forming an outer circle, but the little people sit on the floor with the lighted lanterns provided for each tent on the floor in front of them. They sing the closing verse of "America," draw down the flag, and say the Lord's Prayer, good of humanity.

Good nights are said, and at 8 o'clock all the young children are in bed, with a lighted lantern hanging at the entrance of every tent. The superintendent and help-ers generally take this opportunity for getting better acquainted with the mothers, often serving lemonade, feed tea, and other little treats.

Show on Mondays.

A "show" is always a feature of Monday evenings. Outside talent is seldom called in the children and workers usually furnishing the programme. A slide show, with animal crackers and pink lemonade for refreshments, a watermelon feast and a peanut hunt have been among the Monday evening "shows." But even these are brought to a close early, and all is still, with only the night watchman making his hourly rounds. And a rather unusual type is this night watchman, for he warms all the milk for the bottle-fed babies.

Camp "Get Well," the baby camp, is open for the first time this year. It is intended for nursing babies and their mothers, babies at the age when summer troubles swell the mortality record so pitifully. Both baby and mother, in need of care, are taken on a moment's notice. A baby specialist, Dr. Taylor Jones, is resident at the camp, and two baby nurses are in constant attendance. On account of the cool summer, only a few infants have so far been registered. The superintendent is Mrs. Louis A. Simon, who gives her voluntary services to the camp. The help-ers are kindergarten teachers, who also render gratuitous service. The babies are cared for in a screened open-air ward, with rooms in the house adjoining for mothers. Modern hygienic bath and dispensary accommodations are provided, and all the appliances necessary for a nursery are a part of the equipment.

"A Summer day in Camp," July 7, is to be held for both these camps. Booths will be erected in all the large department stores and in the lobby at Columbia Theater and at Polk's. Patrons will be told about the work, pictures may be seen of the various phases of camp life, and contributions will be received to aid in this necessary work for the good of humanity.

HAPPY CHILDREN AT CAMP GOOD WILL.

Group of tots at summer camp, who are enjoying cool breezes of Rock Creek Park.

BOY ROBBERS TO BE WHIPPED.

English Court Decries Deeds of Bitch as Punishment.

London, July 6.—The bitch is the undisciplined punishment in these Dickensian days for the modern Dick Turpin of Highgate Woods. At a local police court, yesterday, a boy, who had three other lads held him up in the woods and took his watch, the police stated that in the last month there had been ten or fifteen complaints of boys besetting and robbing people. One boy said: "When he refused to turn out his pockets he was struck on the arm with a piece of iron. There was a reign of terror among the boys who passed through the woods in the way to school. Accordingly Daniel Whittaker, aged twelve; Charles Dickens, aged twelve, and William Nevill, aged ten, are each to receive six strokes with the birch."

SALON SHOWS LITTLE FROM SCULPTORS

Munich, July 6.—In the center of a hall at this year's salon, Jahresausstellung, is displayed a large "Fountain with Three Dancing Girls," by Walter Schott. Still sculpture has only a small place in the salon this year, and what there is of it is not so important as in former years. Among the other exhibits which are most admired may be mentioned a composition in high relief by Ludwig Maschl, entitled "Come Unto Me," showing Christ consoling those who are weary and heavy-laden. The feeling which the sculptor has expressed in this fine work is altogether beautiful and really religious.

A small but very graceful group, in bronze, is "The Joy of Life" of Clara Bohnert.

The bronze "Fos" of Gottlieb Elster is one of the most satisfactory works on view. These, and the innocent study of a nude maiden, which its creator, Reinhold Boettig, has aptly named "Temptation," are perhaps the most noteworthy of the year's exhibits by the sculptor in the Munich salon.

To prevent a person being misled by steam in the use of a sailing boat, an Ohio inventor has patented a sail with a hinged lid, which may be opened with any long-handled utensil.

Rich Irish Americans Scored by Priest

Rev. Father Michael O'Flanagan Declares They Are Indifferent to Ireland's Ancient Lore and Traditions.

The Rev. Michael O'Flanagan, envoy of the Gaelic League, who recently visited Washington and a short time ago lectured in St. Louis, delivered a festival of the American branch at Terrace Garden the other night by a bitter attack on the wealthy Irish Catholics of this country. He mentioned no names, but his auditors gave external evidence of understanding when he said there were millions of Irishmen in America "green waistcoats on St. Patrick's Day" and in numerous ways affected to be patrons of culture excepting when opportunity was offered to do something practical. He was cheered for nearly five minutes when he described the effort to endow a chair of Irish literature at the Catholic University which was effected, he said, not by the gold of millionaires, but by the 50-cent subscriptions of members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Father O'Flanagan declared the league had made "a good beginning" in this country, but that it had much work to accomplish. There was a "rich literature to rescue from the museums."

"The learned world," he said, "is astonished that wealthy Irishmen should be so indifferent to these treasures of Ireland's ancient lore. They might learn a lesson from the wealthy men of other races. Let a book printed in England two or three hundred years ago appear on sale, and you have a Pierpont Morgan on the spot, eager to get possession of it at any price."

He said Irish scholars, dwelling in foreign countries, had preserved the literature of their native land in the original tongue. French and German scholars deemed it a worthy work to be able to translate them into their tongues. They placed the German or French text opposite the Gaelic original.

Few Real Collectors.

"Of all the Irish millionaires in New York who would like to be considered patrons of art and learning, how many do you think could show a friend even a single copy of these publications?" he asked. The wealthy men of our race spend their thousands in collecting wild birds eggs in the South Sea Islands or bugs in Madagascar.

He declared that when Columbia University wanted a man to give lessons in Gaelic had to go to Switzerland, and

when Harvard wanted a man for a similar purpose she hired a Yankee whose people have been so long here that he has to guess what country they come from. And when the Catholic University was ready to select a professor for the chair of Irish it was compelled to take an Irish-American, then send him to Switzerland to acquire sufficient Irish to tell him for the classroom.

"Only one American," he said, "of national reputation has raised his voice in favor of Irish scholarship, and he is an ex-President who has to go back to one of his four great-grandmothers to find the little Irish blood that is in him."

He added that when he first came to this country the Metropolitan Museum had evidence of the early civilization of nearly every Christian country but Ireland. Now all was changed. There was no lack of evidences of Irish civilization. But he put them there, do you suppose?" he asked.

He said that the league could not compel wealthy Irishmen to become genuine patrons of learning, but it could tear off the mask and make them "play the game" and hide under the body when they see the Hibernians go by on St. Patrick's Day.

A new electric fan seems to combine all the well-known types by having two sets of blades which rotate about the standard and tilt up and down as the breeze.

A NOTRE DAME LADY'S APPEAL.

To all knowing sufferers of rheumatism, whether muscular or of the joints: pain in the kidneys, or neuralgia, pains in the limbs, or a home treatment which has repeatedly cured all of these troubles. She feels it her duty to send it to all sufferers FREE. You cure yourself at home, as thousands will testify—no change of climate being necessary. This simple discovery banishes ure acid from the blood, loosens the stiffened joints, soothes the burning, brightens the eyes, giving elasticity and tone to the whole system. If the above interests you, for proof address Mrs. M. S. MERRILL, Box R, Notre Dame, Ind.